

Councilmember Lynn Williams
District 34
4020 Dorcas Drive
Nashville, TN 37215

*Electronic transmission to Federal Communications Commission
December 11, 2006*

Dear Chairman Martin, Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate, and other
Members of the Federal Communications Commission:

I am writing to express my opposition to proposed action that will reduce the authority of local government to negotiate telecommunications franchise terms by limiting build-out requirements and capping fees. As a member of Nashville's legislative body, I have participated in three cable franchise negotiations and know first-hand the value of these assets. I can also assure you that franchise agreements can be reached within the 90 day under most circumstances *as long as the telecommunications company works in good faith to reach an equitable agreement*, and therein lies the risk of giving municipalities limits on time allowed such agreements. In Nashville, we have achieved positive results well within this time frame.

PEG serves such an important and distinct function that it should not be tied into cash value. In Nashville, the public gains government access through use of one channel as budget hearings, boards and commissions air proceedings continually. On two channels arts and education programming (much of it originates locally), offers outreach and training to all sectors of the community. Lastly, all members of the public are able to generate media messages and balance corporate goals through use of community access.

The 5% franchise fee collected by the city offsets problems and liability presented when the public right-of-way is infringed by telecom companies. Neighborhood yards and streets must be locally controlled and maintained. Cities must have the leverage to enforce proper use and management and the 5% allowed has proven reasonable to meet this purpose.

Since all people in a city should have access to funded benefits, universal service should be held out as a goal for securing any communication-service franchise. Eliminating this goal will further disenfranchise low-income citizens and residents of out-lying areas who are likely to desire service, though delivered at a greater cost.

I am looking forward to attending this afternoon's FCC hearing in my city and appreciate the opportunity to have input on the issue of media

ownership, too. I implore you to allow cities to continue to manage public right-of-way issues since they are as local as local can be.

Sincerely,
Metro Councilwoman Lynn Williams